

AMENDMENT AND RESPONSE UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 - EXPEDITED PROCEDURE

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Title: Video combiner

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IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of producing a video signal from a system at a set top box used for outputting video programming to at least one viewer, said method comprising:
 - receiving a first video signal at said system set top box;
 - processing said first video signal to produce a first image stored in memory of said system set top box, said first image not intended to be displayed independently;
 - receiving a second video signal at said system set top box;
 - processing said second video signal to produce a second image stored in said memory of said system set top box, said second image not intended to be displayed independently;
 - receiving a presentation description in said system, set top box; accessing said presentation description comprising a set of instructions that define a portion of said first image and that defines a plurality of different manners in which a [[said]] portion of said first image and a portion of said second image may be combined; [.,.]
 - selecting a selected manner in which the images are combined being selected from said plurality of different manners of image combinations based upon user preference information in said system set top box, and the presentation description instructions also defining a sequence of operations performed over time;
 - combining said portion of said first image with said portion of second image in accordance with said selected manner in which the images are combined of said presentation description and said user preference information in said set top box to produce a combined image; and
 - outputting said combined image as said video signal as part of said video programming to said at least one viewer.

2. (Previously Presented) The method as set forth in claim 1 wherein said combining further comprises:

applying a mask that defines said portion of said first image.

3. (Previously Presented) The method as set forth in claim 1 wherein said combining further comprises:

generating a logical combination of said portion of said first image and said portion of said second image.

4. (Previously Presented) The method as set forth in claim 1 wherein said combining further comprises:

generating a mathematical combination of said portion of said first image and said portion of said second image.

5. (Previously Presented) The method as set forth in claim 1 wherein said combining further comprises:

scaling said portion of said first image.

6. (Previously Presented) The method as set forth in claim 1 wherein said combining further comprises:

warping said portion of said first image.

7. (Previously Presented) The method as set forth in claim 1 wherein said accessing said presentation description further comprises:

fetching said presentation description across a network.

8. (Previously Presented) The method as set forth in claim 1 wherein said accessing said presentation description further comprises:

receiving a network address at which said presentation description can be accessed;
fetching said presentation description from said network address.

9. (Previously Presented) The method as set forth in claim 1 wherein said accessing said presentation description further comprises:

selecting said presentation description from a plurality of presentation descriptions contained in said first video signal.

10. (Previously Presented) The method as set forth in claim 1, said method further comprising:

modifying said presentation description in response to input from said at least one viewer.

11. (Currently Amended) The method as set forth in claim 1, said method further comprising:

processing said first video signal to produce first audio data stored in said memory of said system set-top box;

processing said second video signal to produce second audio data stored in said memory of said system set-top box;

accessing said presentation description that describes the manner in which said first audio data and said second audio data are combined; and

combining said first audio data and said second audio data in accordance with said presentation description.

12. (Currently Amended) A method of producing a sequence of combined images in a system set-top box used for outputting video programming to said at least one viewer, said method comprising:

receiving a first video signal at said system set-top box;

processing said first video signal to produce a first sequence of images stored in memory of said system set-top box, said first sequence of images not intended to be displayed independently;

receiving a second video signal at said system set-top box;

processing said second video signal to produce a second sequence of images stored in said memory of said system set-top box, said second sequence of images not intended to be displayed independently;

receiving a presentation description in said system set-top box; accessing said presentation description comprising a set of instructions that define a portion of said first sequence of images and that defines a plurality of different manners in which a [[said]] portion of said first sequence of images and a portion of said second sequence of images may be combined; [.,.]

selecting a selected manner in which the sequences of images are combined being selected from said plurality of different manners of combinations based upon user preference information in said system set-top box, and the presentation description instructions also defining a sequence of operations performed over time;

combining said portion of said first sequence of images with said portion of said second sequence of images in accordance with said selected manner of combination of said presentation description and said user preference information in said set-top box to produce a finalized sequence of combined images; and

outputting said finalized sequence of combined images as a part of said video programming to said at least one viewer.

13. (Previously Presented) The method as set forth in claim 12 wherein said combining further comprises:

applying a mask specified in said presentation description that defines said portion of said first sequence of images.

14. (Previously Presented) The method as set forth in claim 13 wherein said applying a mask further comprises:

executing program code that modifies said mask to select a different portion of at least one image of said first sequence of images.

15. (Previously Presented) The method as set forth in claim 12 wherein said combining further comprises:

generating a mathematical combination of said portion of one image of said first sequence of images and said portion of one image of said second sequence of images.

16. (Previously Presented) The method as set forth in claim 12 wherein said combining said video signals further comprises:

generating a logical combination of said portion of one image of said first sequence of images and said portion of one image of said second sequence of images.

17. (Previously Presented) The method as set forth in claim 12 wherein said combining said video signals further comprises:

scaling said portion of one image of said first sequence of images.

18. (Previously Presented) The method as set forth in claim 12 wherein said combining said video signals further comprises:

warping said portion of one image of said first sequence of images.

19. (Previously Presented) The method as set forth in claim 12, said method further comprising:

modifying said presentation description in response to input from said at least one viewer.

20. (Currently Amended) A method of controlling generation of a combined video signal for use as video programming to at least one viewer in a system set-top box unit at said at least one viewer's premises from a broadcast site, said method comprising:

transmitting a first digital video signal to said system set-top box, said first digital video signal comprising a first image not intended to be displayed independently;
transmitting a second digital video signal to said system set-top box substantially simultaneously with said first digital video signal, said second digital video signal comprising a second image not intended to be displayed independently;

loading image combination code into said system set-top box; and
transmitting a presentation description to said system set-top box, said presentation
description comprising a set of instructions that define a plurality of different manners
in which a portion of said first image contained in said first digital video signal may
be combined with a portion of said second image contained in said second digital
video signal to produce said combined video signal for use as video programming to
at least one viewer, a selected [[the]] manner in which the images are combined being
selected from said plurality of different manners of combinations based upon user
preference information in said system set-top box, and the presentation description
instructions also defining a sequence of operations performed over time.

21. (Currently Amended) The method as set forth in claim 20 wherein said
providing a presentation description further comprises:

transmitting a network address that said system set-top box employs to access said
presentation description.

22. (Currently Amended) The method as set forth in claim 20 wherein said
providing a presentation description further comprises:

transmitting said presentation description to said system set-top box as a part of said first
digital video signal.

23. (Currently Amended) The method as set forth in claim 20 wherein said
providing a presentation description further comprises:

selecting said presentation description from a plurality of presentation descriptions
wherein said presentation description conforms to the requirements of said system set
top box.

24. (Currently Amended) The method as set forth in claim 20 wherein said providing a presentation description further comprises:

altering a general presentation description to conform to the requirements of said system set top box.

25. (Previously Presented) The method as set forth in claim 20 wherein said providing a presentation description further comprises:

tailoring a general presentation description to correspond to a viewer preference.

26. (Currently Amended) The method as set forth in claim 20 wherein said providing a presentation description further comprises:

transmitting a plurality of presentation descriptions to said system set top box from which said system set top box selects one presentation description that conforms to the requirements of said system set top box.

27. (Currently Amended) A system that produces a combined video signal for use as video programming to at least one viewer, said system comprising:

a processor;
a memory, said memory coupled to said processor;
a tuner/decoder that receives a first video signal and a second video signal substantially simultaneously and that routes control information contained in said first video signal to said processor and that routes first video data from said first video signal and second video data from said second video signal to a video decoder;
said video decoder that decodes said first video data and produces a first video image in said memory and that decodes said second video data and produces a second video image in said memory, said first video image and said second video image not intended to be displayed independently;
a video controller, said video controller receiving a presentation description in said set top box, said presentation description comprising a set of instructions that define a plurality of different manners in which a portion of said first video image may be

combined with a portion of said second video image to produce said combined video signal, a selected manner in which the images are combined being selected from said plurality of different manners of combinations based upon user preference information in said system set-top-box, and the presentation description instructions also defining a sequence of operations performed over time; program code operating in said processor that employs said presentation description and that accesses said portion of said first video image and said portion of said second video image in said memory and that combines said first portion of said first video image and said portion of said second video image according to [[in]] the selected manner of combination specified by said presentation description and said user preference information in said set-top-box to create said combined video signal; and a video output unit that outputs said combined video signal to a display device as a part said video programming to said at least one viewer.

28. (Previously Presented) The system as set forth in claim 27, said system further comprising:

a network interface that accesses a remote server to receive said presentation description.

29. (Previously Presented) The system as set forth in claim 27 wherein said decoder further produces first audio data in said memory from said first video information and produces second audio data in said memory from said second video information.

30. (Previously Presented) The system as set forth in claim 29 wherein said presentation description further specifies the manner in which said first audio data is combined with said second audio data.

31. (Previously Presented) The system as set forth in claim 27, said system further comprising:

a user interface that receives an input from said at least one viewer that modifies said presentation description.

32. (Cancelled)

33. (Previously Presented) The system as set forth in claim 27 wherein said program code operating in said processor further comprises:

a software routine that controls said decoder to perform at least part of the combination of said portion of said first video image and said portion of said second video image in a manner specified by said presentation description.

34. (Previously Presented) The system as set forth in claim 27 wherein said program code operating in said processor further comprises:

a software routine that selects said presentation from a plurality of presentation descriptions contained in said first video signal.

35. (Cancelled)